



Ethnopolitics

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/reno20>

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Available online: 15 Sep 2011

To cite this article: David G. Haglund & Tyson McNeil-Hay (2011): The "Germany Lobby" and US Foreign Policy: What, if Anything, Does It Tell Us about the Debate over the "Israel Lobby"?, *Ethnopolitics*, 10:3-4, 321-344

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2010.543803>

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The ‘Germany Lobby’ and US Foreign Policy: What, if Anything, Does It Tell Us about the Debate over the ‘Israel Lobby’?

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ABSTRACT This article seeks to shed some comparative light on the recent debate over the influence on US foreign policy of what has been termed the ‘Israel Lobby’. The authors highlight an earlier debate, similar in some ways, that took place a century ago in America, concerning the mooted influence of German-Americans upon US policy toward the European balance of power. They conclude that while the ‘lobbying’ associated with diasporas is certainly an intriguing aspect of American policy discussions, the experience of what they call the ‘Germany Lobby’ stands as a reminder of the need for caution in ascribing causal significance to ethnic pressure politics.

Introduction: Storm over the Israel Lobby

One of the most heated discussions ever about ethnic ‘lobbies’ and US foreign policy has taken place during the past half-decade, touched off by the publication of an article in March 2006 and a follow-on book a year later by two foremost theorists of international relations in the American academy, who allege that America’s national interest has effectively been hijacked by ‘special interests’, in this case an ‘Israel Lobby’ (Massing, 2006). The authors, Professors John Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago and Stephen Walt of Harvard University, argue that this lobby exercises undue and baneful influence over the shaping of the country’s Middle Eastern policy, to the detriment not only of the USA, but also of Israel itself (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006, 2007). Both scholars are associated with a foreign policy perspective known as ‘realism’, and in particular with a variant that puts the emphasis on the instructions ostensibly imparted to decision-makers by the international system, and for this reason they can be considered ‘structural realists’. For structural realists, and indeed for all realists, the national interest is not a matter to be trifled with, and should never be allowed to become the handmaiden of parochial groups with agendas that contradict or otherwise frustrate the purposes of the greater collectivity; and this is what they say has happened in respect of

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American foreign policy in the volatile Middle East—that it is being tailored to the preferences of a self-interested minority, to the detriment of the majority.

For daring to make such an argument, the two professors have come under a barrage of criticism, some of it fair (Lieberman, 2009) and some of it anything but (Foxman, 2007, pp. 55, 65). Among the least creditable (and honourable) charges is that the pair are closet (or worse) anti-Semites. We can dismiss such charges as being obviously baseless, but there are other critiques more worthy of being registered. Indeed, some of the critics of Mearsheimer and Walt are themselves as unhappy as the two professors over what they take to be America's unflinching support of Israel, but these critics argue that an intensive focus on 'lobbying' misses a bigger point. Instead, they look to various other aspects of America's political and even strategic culture in a bid to understand the broad support Israel receives on the part of American society—including and especially contemporary 'gentile Zionists', who attach great symbolic and religious importance to Israel's ability to thrive, if only for their, or America's, own sake (Mead, 2008). For others, US support of Israel is merely a continuation of a long-standing urge to expand American interests and preserve access to as much of the rest of the world as possible, an impulse that is as old as the country itself, betraying a 'penchant for expansionism [having] nothing to do with Israel' (Bacevich, 2008, p. 792). One critic, Mackubin Thomas Owens, of the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, goes so far as to rub salt into epistemological wounds by accusing the authors of abandoning, through their emphasis on subsystemic (even subnational) 'variables', the very fundamentals of International Relations (IR) realist theory, and wonders whether 'aliens have taken over the bodies' of the two realist professors (Owens, 2006, p. 4).

As we contemplate this debate, we cannot help but experience a profound sense of *déjà vu*. For whatever else might be said about the storm over the Israel Lobby, it has to be acknowledged that discussions of the alleged influence wielded by ethnic and other interest groups are nothing new in American foreign policy. In fact, they are old hat, and in this article we are going to discuss a similar debate that took form nearly a century ago—a debate about the putative distorting impact on the national interest that one powerful diasporic group was said to have: the German-Americans. Nor are the German-Americans alone in having constituted an interest group (a 'lobby') said to exercise influence over the shaping of American foreign policy: a roughly contemporaneous group, the Irish-Americans, have had much the same said of them (Doorley, 2005), and up to the present time there has been no shortage of commentary on how other ethnic diasporas come to play a part in the elaboration—or, as some would have it, contamination (Huntington, 1997)—of the national interest (Watanabe, 1984; Ambrosio, 2002; Paul & Paul, 2009).

In these pages, we concentrate on the German-Americans, because it can be said of them that they constituted the *case par excellence* of ethnic diaspora pressure on the policy-making process, and therefore they rank, at least on the surface of things, as the best referent for taking the contemporary measure of the Israel Lobby. So in what follows, and mindful of the pitfalls of analogical reasoning (Khong, 1992), we are going to suggest in this article that there might be merit in a comparative revisiting of that earlier episode, as a means of better contextualizing the more recent debate over the Israel Lobby. We say this because we are not at all convinced that the nature either of international politics or of American foreign policy-making has fundamentally altered between the start of the twentieth century and the start of the twenty-first; thus, our intent is to suggest that what did (or more to the point, did *not*) transpire from the

efforts of the Germany Lobby to influence US foreign policy possesses illustrative merit for the purposes of assessing the ability of the Israel Lobby to sway the direction of America's national interest. Thus, we propose to utilize the past in a bid to shed light on the present. At the same time, we seek to draw on social science theory for the purposes of re-examining and understanding that past better (Haydu, 1998).

In doing this, we intend to expand on two analytical foci. The first of these concerns the conceptual and theoretical backdrop of contemporary discussions on the impact ethnic interest groups are said to have on international security and on American foreign policy; this is the topic of the following section. The second focus consists of an historical assessment of the German-Americans and the part that they were often argued to have in shaping US strategy towards one particular aspect of foreign policy, namely America's relationship to the European balance of power during the early decades of the twentieth century; we cover it in two subsequent parts of the article. Our penultimate section brings us back to the comparison with which we began, by examining major claims made regarding today's Israel Lobby—claims that in our conclusion we assess in light of our interpretation of the relevance of the Germany Lobby to the contemporary debate.

The Influence of 'Diasporas' in International Security and US Foreign Policy

There certainly is nothing unusual about asking whether a link might exist between ethnic diasporas and America's foreign policy, and to those familiar with debates about how the latter is fashioned, posing the question is hardly provocative, much less 'dangerous'. That it might seem to be otherwise has a lot to do with the way in which the controversy triggered by Mearsheimer and Walt has been framed, for to the uninstructed it almost appears as if American Jews represent the archetypal case of diasporic lobbying—not to say the very inventors of the practice—and that in their absence no one would be much interested in trying to explore whether ethnic diasporas could possibly seek to influence America's foreign policy. The focus on a mooted Jewish diaspora and Israel stems from two sources. The first of these is a conceptual issue: many take the very meaning of 'diaspora' in international relations to be so closely associated with world Jewry as to imply the virtual exclusion of almost all other ethnic (including religious) identities from the rubric. Second is the conviction that those who do advocate on behalf of Israel are so well-organized and influential as to serve as ethnic lobbying's *ne plus ultra*; thus, even if there might be other diasporic groups around, they so pale in comparison with the Israel Lobby, the veritable platinum standard for the practice, as to be unworthy of much attention.

We think it is wrong to restrict enquiry this narrowly: however effective and important those who militate on behalf of Israel might be, the generic topic of diasporic lobbying in US foreign policy covers much more than America's Jewish community, and does so for three reasons. First, Mearsheimer and Walt themselves have never claimed that the Israel Lobby is exclusively Jewish, although there exists an obvious and quite natural attachment felt by many in the American Jewish community for Israel's well-being (it would be odd were this not the case). Second, although Jews have certainly figured among the world's diaspora groups, they have scarcely been the only identity bearers to be associated with such groups—indeed, the Irish have been said to be second only to the Jews as 'the chronic exiles of this world' (Inglis, 1956, p. 27). Third, there is good reason to believe, as we shall argue later in this paper, that to the extent *any* ethnic entity can be said to have represented the acme of diasporic lobbying in American foreign policy, it has not

been the contemporary Israel Lobby, but rather an older entity, the *Germany* Lobby of a century ago (App, 1967; Shain, 1999, pp. 10–11; Smith, 2000, p. 82). Accordingly, it is in light of the German-Americans' experience with trying to shape American foreign policy that we might be able to take a useful contemporary measure of other such lobbying efforts, including and especially those said to be associated with the Israel Lobby. In short, we are heeding the words of James Rosenau, who a generation ago advised those wishing to think more theoretically about foreign policy always to ask of the topic at hand, 'of what is it an instance?' (Rosenau, 1980). So we set out to ask whether that earlier experience might help us contextualize the more recent debate.

To begin with, a few comments are in order as to how we might conceptualize diaspora. The word comes to us from the Greek ($\delta\iota\alpha\sigma\pi\rho\acute{\alpha}\sigma$), and despite its modern connection with Jewish populations, it originally referred to the dispersal of ethnic Greeks around the Mediterranean basin. Robin Cohen noted that, in this original usage, diaspora had a positive connotation, associated with the expansion and consolidation of the power of diverse Greek city-states via colonization of non-Greek areas (Cohen, 1996, p. 508). This is in contrast to the rather sombre view of diaspora in the modern sense, which is natural given its association with the often tragic history of the diasporic Jews. Beyond connotations, however, one must be careful about the denotations as well.

As we understand and will be applying the term, one of the defining characteristics of a diaspora is that it entails a non-negligible connection between the diasporic population and its 'homeland'. Thus, an ethnic diaspora can be construed as a racial, cultural, linguistic, or religious minority residing elsewhere than its supposed homeland *and* maintaining a strong link to that latter. The homeland may be a state in itself, even a powerful one, as it is for the Chinese diaspora; or it may consist of a piece of another state or states, as it does for the Kurdish groups residing in Germany and elsewhere; or it may not be a state at all, existing only in historical myth and memory, as it did for the Jewish diaspora for so many centuries. The diaspora may have been formed of economic migrants, refugees, exiles, or some mix thereof. It might even, so to speak, have been 'shipwrecked' by state contraction or the crumbling of an existing empire. Most of its members may detest the current situation of their homeland and desire regime change or secession: the Cuban-American diaspora comes to mind in this regard (Haney & Vanderbush, 1999). On the other hand, most of its members may wholeheartedly support the government of the homeland and attempt to aid it from abroad. The important point is that diasporas must have some meaningful connection to their homeland, though how such a connection is to be interpreted leaves much to the discretion of the analyst.

For instance, today it is apparent that German names abound in North America, but most of their bearers feel no connection to Germany and thus do not constitute a diaspora in the same way that they did a century or so ago, when, as we will show, many certainly *did* evince an acute interest in the prospects of the ancestral homeland. Today's German North Americans are sometimes even said barely to constitute an ethnic *group*, let alone an ethnic diaspora, because for the vast majority of them their assimilation has been so complete that they do not recognize themselves as anything but Americans or Canadians. It must be open to question whether we can still regard them as a diaspora, at least as we have qualified that concept above. By contrast, the Greek community of North America, because it has kept up strong connections to Greece and because many of its members follow Greek politics and Greek affairs even more closely than they do those of their host countries, certainly seems to fill the diasporic bill. There is clearly a

Greek diaspora in North America; it is the concern for the homeland on behalf of North American Greeks that makes it so, just as the lack of concern shown by German North Americans for Germany means that scarcely anyone today talks about a German diaspora in Canada or the USA, which is a very sharp departure from the practice of a century ago.¹

Of course, if things were to change and German North Americans began to dig up and construct links to Germany, put significant attention and energy into these links and maintain them over time, there would be no reason why we could not term them a German diaspora. Diasporas can become dormant and later be activated, as seemed to occur with Croatian North American populations when the Croatian declaration of independence reignited their pride and gave them a kin state with which to forge links. Likewise, active diasporas can lapse, lose their connections with the homeland, and even be assimilated into the host state's dominant culture, as happened to the German-American diaspora, which had been one of the best organized and most politically active American diasporas in the period before the Great War (Shain, 1994–1995).

This is only part of the story, however, for if homeland nationalism can and does motivate diasporas, so too can *host state* nationalism make claims upon them, as we shall see below in our discussion of German-America during the early twentieth century. The result is that diasporic groups can on occasion end up being pulled in opposite directions, to the point of their being suspected of having 'dual' if not 'divided' loyalties. This is particularly the case in host states that pursue (or claim to pursue) an assimilationist strategy when dealing with migrants. In countries that imagine and portray themselves as 'nations of immigrants', such as the USA, it can be especially difficult to resist the attraction of host state nationalism.² In this regard, Thomas Eriksen's (2004) distinction between the competing logics of 'kinship' and 'place', even though not aimed specifically at diasporas, captures the sense of being caught between two nationalisms. The problem of dual loyalties has sometimes surfaced during the recent debate over the Israel Lobby, but it has done so with nothing even remotely approaching the acerbity it displayed in the earlier debate over the Germany Lobby; and it remains a constant background feature of all discussions about the 'influence' said to attach to ethnic lobbies, both in international security writ large and in American foreign policy.

Diasporas, then, must be defined in no small degree by their connections to their homelands. But this sentimental attachment aside, how might they be said to figure as 'actors' both in international security and in the shaping of American foreign policy? In a bid to clarify our analysis and to help organize our thinking on diasporas and their effect on international security, we introduce a pair of 'ideal types', one being diasporas that put the emphasis on 'extra-legal' means of seeking to influence the course of events, and the other being diasporas stressing the need to work legally within host state domestic political parameters. It will be clear that the two cases we discuss fall into this second category. That is to say that while many diasporic groups seek (and at times attain) influence over the course of events through the employment of physical force (for instance via the provision of arms and money to combatant groups, or by downing airliners, or even by launching raids), it is really only with the legal targeting of the policy of the host state that we are concerned. Such targeting may be effected through the mobilization of the vote in the host state. Or it may take the form of campaign contributions. It may also consist mainly of petitioning ('pressuring') the organs of state for policy redress, especially the legislative branch. In all of these instances, the attempt to influence will

perform be accompanied by public relations activities subsumed under the rubric ‘lobbying’ (Ornstein & Elder, 1978). The argument, then, is that such lobbying efforts—dependent on the size, societal esteem and organizational clout said to be wielded by the diaspora—might result in the policies and even the self-conception of interests in the host state becoming inflected in directions desired by the diaspora, and will do so *as a result of its actions*. In other words, it will have ‘influenced’ the course of events, whether by compelling a government to do its bidding, or by deterring a government from staking out a policy direction antithetical to its aims.

Many diasporas, such as the Armenians in France or the Rohingya in Burma, would fit into only one or the other of the above ideal types; but there are some diasporas that embrace both means of seeking influence—physical force and legal targeting. For instance, the Cuban-American diaspora has had a direct effect on international security through its own physical-force activities, running the gamut from bombing airliners, to raiding Cuban territory, and even attempting to assassinate the country’s leader (Korten & Nielsen, 2008). These actions were certainly meant to change the policies (or, more precisely, the regime) of the kin state; but the diaspora has also actively lobbied, quite legally, in the host state, in an effort to influence policy-making there.

Notwithstanding the menu of options available to diasporic groups when they seek to become consequential actors in international security, we focus only on the legal option in this article, for two reasons. The first concerns the nature of the political process in the USA, where the workings of government are said to be unusually open to influence attempts on the part of a multitude of special (including ethnic) interests. The second is a function of the *power* of America: tales of ‘decline’ to the contrary notwithstanding, the USA is now and will for some time continue to be the most powerful state in the international system. Nor is American power anything new in the international setting: a century ago, at a time when the country’s own ‘rise’ to superpower status was apparent to anyone with eyes to see it, the USA became *ipso facto* a *potentially* consequential actor in the European, and by extension, global balance of power—if only, of course, should American leaders at that time have chosen so to act. In short, an ethnic diaspora wanting to exercise influence in international security could do much, much worse than to try to gain voice in the US policy-making process. Diasporas seeking to alter the course of international security understood then, as they understand now, the necessity of trying to shape the manner in which America conceives and promotes its own ‘national interest’.

Now, the ‘national interest’ is nothing if not an ambiguous concept. Although we find it a useful, even necessary, construct to invoke in any discussion of ethnic diasporas and their attempts to influence, we are more than mindful of the problematical nature of postulating such an interest. Everywhere in the Western world, it seems, there are legions of critics waiting to pounce on and highlight the drawbacks of the concept. It has often been said to suffer from vagueness and indeterminacy, and the proof of its unreliability as a guide to policy is inherent in its uncanny ability to point simultaneously to any number of policy paths, so long as they are all trodden on behalf of that self-same national interest. Moreover, because for some analysts the national interest is said to be defined in terms of power, it violates the principle of social science parsimony, thereby raising hob with Occam’s razor, which warns of the folly of ‘multiplying essences’ (i.e. trying to define one complicated concept by reference to a second, equally complicated concept). It has even been branded an outright lie, on the basis that there never has been such a thing as a collective interest attributable to the ‘nation’ (state, really), but only a set of discrete

partisan interests, based on section, class, ethnicity, gender, lifestyle, and so forth. Finally, some who may have been prepared to concede usefulness to the concept in an earlier time are now wont to defect from it, dismissing its value either because the world has changed and states (i.e. those entities that serve as the referent for the national interest) have lost competency in the new era of globalization, or because particular states have become so altered by the processes of 'post-modernism' that they can no longer hope to lay claim to a collective (national) interest. We are, they say, living in a 'post-Westphalian' world, one in which the state has itself lost the power it presumably once monopolized.

We take a different perspective in this article. As we interpret matters, the analytical construct we know of as the 'national interest' made sense a century ago, in respect of the Germany Lobby (and other pressure groups), and it continues to make sense today, regarding the Israel Lobby; but we are aware that its meaning can never be self-evidently deducible from assessments of the relative distribution of capability throughout the international system (as seems to be the favoured analytical approach both of 'structural' realists and, *mutatis mutandis*, 'neoclassical' realists). We *do* think one can invoke the national (to say again, state) interest, if by the latter we understand that what we are really talking about is 'quite simply ... the language of state action' (Weldes, 1996, p. 276). It is a language that requires being spoken if central decision-makers, in the USA but elsewhere as well, are to understand not only the *ends* that they seek to attain, but also the *means* appropriate for satisfying those ends. For those decision-makers, then, the national interest is and remains a *sine qua non* of good strategizing; and for those, such as ourselves, who seek to assess the degree to which ethnic diasporas might be said to gain *entrée* into the shaping of strategy, the concept is a necessary not fictitious construct.

So how are diasporas thought to exercise sway over the definition and promotion of the national interest? They might do this indirectly, almost by a process of cognitive osmosis, in effect altering perceptions, for good or bad, in the host state to such an extent that thinking about diasporas becomes rooted in broader conceptualizations of 'identity'. As constructivists are quick to remind us, identity is a fundamental component of interest (Rowley & Weldes, 2008). Thus, according to the 'osmotic' thesis, there need be no active lobbying *per se* of anyone by anyone; the influence is attained because public perceptions (or at least, those of decision-makers) come into alignment either with or against certain foreign lands owing to the manner in which there is adjudged to be a 'fit' between diasporic groups living in the host state and this latter's own 'national identity'. Importantly, this diffuse influence can go in either direction.

For instance, the existence of a diaspora from kin state *x* might make host state *y* more amenable to *x*, because a positive relationship between the diaspora and *y*'s majority population will breed a level of trust (or 'we-feeling') that can be readily extensible to *x*. The success of individuals and organizations of the Jewish diaspora at instilling a very intimate memory of, and guilt for, the Holocaust into the context in which policy is made is sometimes argued to be the best example of the osmotic thesis (Buruma, 1994). By constantly sensitizing Western populations and decision-makers to any hint of anti-Semitism, the Jewish diasporas in the USA and elsewhere, aided by and partnered with their kin state, have given Israel some vital room to manoeuvre.

The reverse, however, can be argued to happen as well, for a diaspora that fits poorly in its host state (for whatever reason) might thereby raise the ire of the latter's population, leading them to have a negative view of the diaspora's co-ethnics in the kin state; this

effect was held by some to apply in the case of the German-Americans in the early part of the twentieth century, an argument made, *inter alios*, by a young Reinhold Niebuhr, who basically maintained that Imperial Germany would have been better off, in the court of America's public opinion, had there been *no* German diaspora in the country (Niebuhr, 1916). Niebuhr's dim assessment of that diaspora as being a hidebound, largely peasant, community out of touch with progressive trends in modern Germany (as well as in modern America!), accurate in a few respects, nevertheless missed the larger point in its neglect both of the impact of external factors on the deterioration of the bilateral relationship between Germany and the USA, and of the *direct* lobbying efforts of what was, at the time, seen to be a large and very well-organized diasporic interest group—one, moreover, that was perceived in a much more positive way by American society than it was by Niebuhr himself.

Unlike with the osmotic thesis, whereby a diaspora can be said to attain influence without having to do much of anything at all, the historical case on which we focus in this article obliges us to pay attention to a competing 'model' of diasporic influence, what we and so many others have in mind when we speak of ethnic lobbying. This alternative approach, let us call it the lobbying thesis, emphasizes three more or less 'objective' criteria that must be in place in any discussion of how a diaspora is said to be able to influence the policy of the (American) host state in its favour. The first criterion is *size*, in the sense that the diaspora has to be large enough to be thought capable of wielding influence through the vote, either generally across the American electoral system or specifically in certain strategically important regions or states (these latter often being termed 'swing states'). The second is economic clout and social standing, so as to enable diasporic preferences to be heeded as a result of the group's ability to make contributions to the campaigns of contenders for political office and otherwise to engage in 'public affairs' advocacy with some degree of credibility. The third is organizational capacity, meaning that there must be some coherent entity that effectively 'quarterbacks' the influence attempts—an entity that, in the words of one of America's foremost experts on ethnic lobbying, 'formulates the strategy for getting precise pieces of legislation passed, provides unity to the ethnic community, builds alliances with other social forces toward common political goals, and monitors decisionmaking to ensure that friends are rewarded, opponents punished, and feedback accumulated so that the organization can become ever more effective' (Smith, 2000, p. 94).

With these three criteria in mind, let us now turn, in the following two sections, to the German lobby in the America of a century or so ago.

What Was the Germany Lobby?

The penultimate decennial census in the USA, in 2000, recorded the ethnic origins of Americans, as these latter registered them on the census form. Many Americans (and indeed, non-Americans) were surprised to learn that the single largest ancestry with which respondents claimed to identify was *German*, with some 42.8 million Americans (out of a total population that year of nearly 274 million) opting for it. Rounding out the top 10 categories of ethnic affiliation, in descending order, were these nine other identities: Irish (30.5 million), African-American (24.9 million), English (24.5 million), American (20.2 million), Mexican (18.4 million), Italian (15.6 million), Polish (9 million), French (8.3 million) and American-Indian (7.9 million). One would think

that with numerical representation such as this, the verb in the heading of this section could stand correcting, and that perhaps what we should be asking is rather, 'what *is* the Germany Lobby'? But the past tense is the correct tense, for it is obvious that to the extent diasporic groups must, as we argued above, demonstrate some non-trivial interest in the affairs of the ancestral homeland, Germany today represents, at most, a folkloric attachment to those who believe themselves to be of German extraction.

So the surprise is not that so many Americans should claim German roots; the surprise is rather that the claims are accompanied by no discernable advocacy on behalf of the kin state. Normally when one contemplates ethnicity in the context of American foreign policy, thoughts naturally turn to the drawing of some tangible connections between the diasporic elements and how they might assist or otherwise further the cause of their kin state (again, always excepting cases such as the Cuban-Americans). Of course, there was a time when German-Americans did express a lively interest in the affairs of the Fatherland, and for a period of years between the post-Civil War decade and the entry of America into World War I their expressions of interest took on no little significance in foreign policy discussions. So much political relevance was attached to diasporic numbers that the question could even be posed, in leading journals of opinion in the USA, whether German-Americans had undue and pernicious influence over America's foreign policy. Posing exactly this question a few years before World War I were the editors of a pro-British publication, *The American Review of Reviews*, in an essay crafted in response to an article that had earlier been published in the *Preussische Jahrbücher*, by a German-American activist from Pennsylvania, Dr William Weber, whose claim had been that because of the sheer size of the German vote in the USA, no American government would dare run the risk of forging an alliance between the world's two leading 'Anglo-Saxon' powers, the USA and the UK (*American Review of Reviews*, 1910). That, concluded Weber, would guarantee that the peace of Europe would be kept, for without American support Britain would be unwilling to challenge Germany military. To Weber and his readers, it went without saying that Germany wanted only peace.

In Berlin itself the view would be expressed from time to time that Germany indeed did possess an inestimable asset in the large German-American diaspora. Kaiser Wilhelm was prone to assess the German-American community in terms of the service it might render the Fatherland, and he was hardly alone. For instance, at Potsdam in June 1908 he was reported to have said that '[e]ven now I rule supreme in the United States, where almost one-half of the population is either of German birth or of German descent, and where three million voters do my bidding at the Presidential elections. No American administration could remain in power against the will of the German voters ...' (Wister, 1916, pp. xiv–xv). Now, it is almost certain that the Kaiser did not choose those exact, and provocative, words with which to express himself at Potsdam. By the same token, however, it is incontestable that he did regard the German-American diaspora as representing a formidable asset for German foreign policy interests, and did remark on this at various times.

In effect, the Kaiser, as did so many other German political figures between the turn of the century and the run-up to World War I, conceived of that diaspora as a geostrategic ace, and why should he, and they, *not* have? After all, it had not been too many years before that America *had* tilted unambiguously in Germany's (Prussia's, really) direction during the war with France in 1870, and that pro-German position had to be somewhat attributable to the direct or indirect lobbying efforts of the German-Americans, which is

why Bismarck was apparently able to boast that ‘Germany had in the United States her second largest state after Prussia’ (quoted in Blumenthal, 1970, p. 116). Certainly French commentators, then and later, were known to bemoan the relative absence of a French diaspora in the USA, which they maintained placed their country at a disadvantage *vis-à-vis* their historic German foe (Tardieu, 1927, pp. 302–303; Duroselle, 1978, pp. 46–48). That said, Washington in 1870 had more than enough reasons of its own—*raisons d’état*, if you will—to sympathize with Prussia and oppose France, given that the Civil War had ended only a half-decade before, and that during that contest Prussia stood out as being the only major European state to back the Union against the Confederacy, especially when contrasted with France, which was clearly bent on containing the rising power of the USA, whether by aiding the South or, as with Louis Napoléon’s Mexican adventure, installing a pro-French government on America’s southern border (Gazley, 1926, pp. 330–337; Blumenthal, 1959, pp. 164–175).

The American official mood regarding Germany would, however, change radically between the Franco-Prussian War and the run-up to World War I, and would do so for reasons related largely to foreign policy differences between Berlin and Washington (Schieber, 1923; Vagts, 1939). These differences would lead, for a while, to an enhancement of the postulated role of the German-Americans as ‘shapers’ of US foreign policy, with the argument increasingly becoming that their electoral clout, to say nothing of their financial prowess and organizational skills, rendered them necessarily a complicating factor, one that any American president must take into consideration when pondering America’s posture towards the global and, especially, European balance of power. Reflecting his own indignation about this growing sense of expectation in Berlin that the German-Americans could be counted on to serve as a check on any Anglo-American alliance, Theodore Roosevelt, at the time governor of New York, wrote on 27 January 1900 to an English correspondent, John St Loe Strachey, that ‘I am amused when I see the Kaiser quoted as saying that the German-Americans would not allow us to go to war with Germany. Those that are born here would practically without exception back up America in the most enthusiastic way were we to get into a struggle with Germany’ (quoted in Morison, 1951, pp. 1143–1144).

Roosevelt would come to renounce this position during the following decade, when he would show himself to be anything but ‘amused’ at Germans’ references to *their* American diaspora. Indeed, by the time World War I broke out, he had started entertaining the direst suspicions about the loyalty to America of that German-American diaspora, whose members he would take to describing with the normatively charged label, ‘hyphenate’. Although to his son-in-law, Nicholas Longworth, he wrote in January 1916 that ‘I hold the hyphenated American, the man who has to call himself German-American, Irish-American, English-American, or Jewish-American, is almost invariably loyal only to what comes before the hyphen’ (quoted in Lovell, 1980, p. 69), it was obvious from his numerous declarations on the ‘hyphenate’ problem that he really ranked the German-Americans uppermost in his misgivings about dual loyalty (Ricard, 1985). English-Americans and Jewish-Americans were not much concern of his, and though annoyed by Irish-America’s attitude towards the war in Europe, he never showed the same animosity towards this diaspora that his great political antagonist, Woodrow Wilson, could at times demonstrate (Leary, 1967; Walsh, 1967).

If Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson could each entertain the suspicion that German-America might be a diplomatic asset for Germany, so too could observers in

Berlin, when they turned their attention to America's demographic make-up. Illustratively among the latter, Admiral (Ret.) Eduard von Knorr confidently predicted in 1915 that England was destined to suffer defeat at the hands of Germany, largely because America was bound to remain neutral in the World War, and this because of the activities of the German diaspora there, which worked tirelessly and effectively to promote the interests of the Fatherland. To von Knorr, England's aggressive actions towards Germany 'hat das Deutschtum der ganzen Welt zu einer machtvollen Einheit verschmolzen, nirgendwo aber mehr als in Amerika' [has fused Germans throughout the world into a powerful unit, but nowhere more than in America] (von Knorr, 1915, p. 7). At the time he was writing, that worldwide German diaspora upon which von Knorr was counting—*das Deutschtum der ganzen Welt*—was almost exclusively a North American one, with 90% of all Germans abroad settled in the USA and a further 4% in Canada. In view of these numbers, why should Germans back home not have been enthused at the potential benefit that could accrue to the Fatherland as a result of the diaspora in the USA? This community appeared to possess everything needed to achieve influence, and then some: in addition to size, it had economic and social standing, as well as organizational effectiveness.

Sources of Diasporic 'Influence': Size, Status and Organization

Germans had been present in America since the early days of European settlement, and at least one scholar claimed that their presence actually predated the age of European colonization: Hugo Grotius went on record in 1642 as declaring, in a tract entitled *On the Origin of the Native Races of America*, that America's indigenous population was largely descended from the Chinese—and the *Germans* (Lepore, 1998, p. 111). We can safely dismiss the eminent jurist's assertion regarding the dating of the German presence in America, but what cannot be gainsaid is its size: by the time of the American Revolution, the Germans were already accounting for nearly 10% of the total population, concentrated largely in what today would be called the Mid-Atlantic states, above all Pennsylvania, leading some of that colony's political elites in the middle of the eighteenth century, for instance Benjamin Franklin, to express grave doubts about their assimilability into Anglo-America (Morgan, 2002, pp. 78–79). After the English they were the largest European-origin ethnic group, a status that would be maintained throughout the nineteenth century, when massive migration from Germany made the USA 'home of the third largest number of German-speaking people in the world' (Ripley, 1976, p. 21).

During the century spanning the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the onset of World War I, some 37 million Europeans left their homeland, all but three million of them destined for the Western hemisphere; of this migratory flow, Germans were prominent in such numbers as to make the 'the *Völkerwanderung* [mass migration] of the Germanic tribes in the early Christian era sink . . . to insignificance' (Hawgood, 1940, pp. xi–xii). As a result of successive waves of heavy immigration during the decades following 1830 (Walker, 1964), which brought roughly six million Germans to American shores, German-Americans were able to maintain their position as the second most numerous European ethnic group in America (again, after the English-descended Americans). The last federal census prior to World War I, in 1910, revealed that out of a total American population of 92 million, some 2.5 million had been born in Germany, with another 5.8 million being second-generation Germans (i.e. American-born but with either one or both parents German-born). Thus, with the first and second generations combining to top the eight million mark, Germans

constituted far and away the leading immigrant group in the USA, and made up 26% of the country's total foreign (i.e. not English-descended) 'stock' (Luebke, 1974, pp. 29–30, 34); but even this understated what might be taken to be the German 'fact' in American demography, for to the first- and second-generation Germans had to be added those who had been in the country longer, yet who continued to identify themselves as German and to live, as much as possible, a German life in America. Thus it could be, and often was, argued that there existed a German 'element' in America (usually construed as meaning anyone with an admixture of German blood flowing through their veins) accounting for no less than 27% of the population in the years just prior to World War I (Gatzke, 1980, pp. 28–31).

Clearly, whether one takes the German-Americans in terms of German-born, German stock, or German element, their demographic weight was considerable; but size, though an important attribute for ethnic diasporas aspiring to political influence in the American context, is not sufficient on its own. It also helps if the diaspora is so prosperous and well-regarded as to expect, and receive, a certain amount of deference from the larger society; that is to say, it helps if the group is seen to possess stature within society. This, over time, the German-Americans would seek, and get—until, of course, America's entry into World War I led to the dashing of the identity grouping known as German-American. That war, which in America touched off a frenetic campaign on behalf of '100% Americanism', effectively derailed for many decades an alternative ethos of 'cultural pluralism' in American life (Kallen, 1924; Kazal, 1995), such that for years to come the dominant model would be an assimilationist one, until the older one re-emerged late in the twentieth century, only this time under the guise of 'multiculturalism' instead of cultural pluralism. In effect, as Russell Kazal tells us, after 1917 German-Americans simply dropped out of American ethnic life, being succeeded by an identity grouping increasingly styling itself Americans of German heritage—but Americans first and foremost, as opposed to the dual-identity grouping that had preceded it, during the cultural-pluralist heyday of German-America (Kazal, 2004, pp. 276–277).

Although the German-Americans had not escaped completely unscathed from the nativist campaigns of the 1850s, triggered as these had been by the enormous influx of Germans, Irish and other Europeans in the wake of the agricultural crisis of the late 1840s, over time German-America would come to be judged by the dominant (Anglo) culture in a relatively positive light (Oren, 1995), and never more so than towards the end of the nineteenth century, when a vogue of Anglo-Saxon racist ideologizing found its negative referent increasingly in what was termed the 'new immigration' arriving in great numbers from southern and eastern Europe (Higham, 1971). Contrasted with these arrivals were the earlier ones, the 'old immigration' from what was held to be the 'Nordic' region of Europe (Grant, 1919)—basically the British Isles, Scandinavia and *Germany*, whence, be it recalled, the Angles and the Saxons had originated, and thus a country that could be argued to be not only 'racially' advanced but also, and perhaps as a result, politically blessed as well, as the Teutonic forests of old were so regularly being celebrated as the cradle of democracy.

Already there had been many arguments advanced by a German-American cultural elite to the effect that America had been 'built' just as much by its German as by its Anglo stock—some even held more by the former than by the latter. Had not the success of the Revolution owed as much to Steuben and de Kalb as it did to the Frenchman Lafayette, if not more so, queried this cultural elite? Was not Lincoln's election in 1860 due to the

German vote? Did not the German-Americans champion the cause of abolitionism and save the Union by their wide-scale enlistment in the Northern army during the Civil War? (Schafer, 1941; Dorpalen, 1942). How different America would have been without these contributions! To these imaginative renderings of history were added new themes bolstered by racial theorizing that privileged 'Nordics' and 'Teutons', such that it was even becoming possible for German-American cultural chauvinists to assert that American civilization had been nourished in *equal* parts by three different cultural tributaries—the Anglo-American, the German-American and the German Empire (*World's Work*, 1915; Dobbert, 1967; Nagler, 1997). For those so inclined, it was possible to consider America itself as representing nothing other than what one writer aptly terms the 'latest link in the genetic chain of Teutonic liberty' (Ross, 1984, p. 919).

Though it would be incorrect to assert that the rising ideology of Pan-Germanism was responsible for the new militancy of German-American cultural elites, much less that the latter took their marching orders from the former (Wertheimer, 1924; Korinman, 1990), there could be no mistaking that German-American identity was now being conceptualized in such a way as to make the kin country an increasingly important element thereof. This would soon have the most profound effect on the diaspora in the USA, as the advent of war in 1914 would throw it into a defensive and ardent campaign on behalf of a country, Germany, that was beginning to look worse and worse to Americans from the dominant Anglo culture; and as the kin state's image plummeted, so too would the diaspora's. It took a while for the devaluation of German-America to be complete, and in the early stages of the fighting, social scientists could still be encountered gauging the 'worth' of America's immigrant communities in such a way as to accord very high standing to German-Americans. One such survey, published after 2 years of fighting in Europe, even ranked German-Americans, using a variety of socio-economic and cultural criteria, ahead of immigrants from England, only surpassed in their 'worthiness' by native-born white Americans (Woolston, 1916)!

The third and final aspect of note regarding the Germany Lobby was its organizational competence. Large numbers and exalted status required shrewd and effective leadership if they were to be most successfully put to the purposes of a politically engaged diaspora, which is what the German-Americans were very much becoming at the dawn of the twentieth century. Initially, German-American political advocacy had been directed primarily at a domestic issue, the worrisome rise in prohibitionist tendencies in Anglo-American society, which to German-America constituted both an assault on traditional civil liberties and a potential menace for German-America's own cultural practices, especially as prohibitionist zealotry often went hand in hand with a determination to ensure that Sabbath laws be more strictly enforced by municipal and state authorities. With German-American associational cultural practices according a central place to Sunday afternoon family gatherings in beer gardens, it is not difficult to understand how temperance movements could have been regarded as a threat to the diaspora's identity (Goyens, 2007).

The deterioration in the European balance of power and the growing threat of war on the old continent turned the German-Americans increasingly from domestic to foreign policy, and in particular to an attempt to accomplish two major objectives: (1) to defend the honour of the Fatherland, which German-Americans felt was increasingly being victimized by a pro-British (and to a much lesser extent, pro-French) press in the USA; and (2) to ensure that should war come to Europe, America would maintain the strictest neutrality, in keeping with what German-Americans insisted was good

old-fashioned American geopolitical wisdom, handed down from George Washington's 'Farewell Address' of 1796, urging America to eschew any entanglement with the European great powers.

The attainment both of the initial domestic agenda and the subsequent foreign policy one was vested primarily in one nationwide ethnic organization, the largest of its or any other day in the history of the USA: the National German-American Alliance (NGAA, or as it was officially called in German, the Deutsch-Amerikanischer National-Bund der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika). This organization was an outgrowth of a Pennsylvania German-American grouping founded in 1899 by Charles John Hexamer, the Deutsch-Amerikanischen Zentralbundes von Pennsylvania; 2 years later, the NGAA was created, with Hexamer becoming its first president, a position he would hold until late 1917. At its peak, the NGAA boasted of a membership of some 2.5 million, and even if that figure may have been inflated as some have argued, it was nevertheless revealing—and to pro-Allied publicists, it was more than merely revealing, it was positively frightening, for after 1914 the NGAA would come to find itself being branded as little more than a puppet of German imperialism in the heart of America (Wile, 1915; Skaggs, 1915; Johnson, 1999).

Nor was the NGAA, largely considered to be a Protestant organization populated by too many free-thinkers in so far as the large German-American Catholic community was concerned, the only organizational entity in German-America. The Catholics had their own group, the Catholic Central Verein (CCV), which by the time war arrived in 1914 would be interacting more cooperatively with the NGAA than ever before, testament to the ability of a language-based collective identity to mitigate the divisiveness of religion. Backing up the German-American political and cultural elite was a vast network of German-language publications, more than 800 in number (most of them weeklies) by the 1890s, and even as late as 1917 still totalling 522 publications, or half of all foreign-language publications in America (Wittke, 1957). Most of these were enthusiastic in their defence of both the Kaiser's policies and of the kin state—until, that is, April 1917 when America entered the war against Germany, forcing German-Americans to confront an agonizing choice, between their host state and their kin state. In the vast majority, German-Americans would find themselves, however reluctantly, opting for the former, but not without some interesting variations on the theme of commitment to the war effort, so poignantly (and imaginatively) captured in the admission of Herman Pellingner, president of the Cleveland branch of the German-American Alliance, that '[a]ll German-Americans, while they are backing America as against Germany, are praying for the defeat of Great Britain and her allies' (quoted in Child, 1939, pp. 163–164).

Between August 1914 and April 1917, from the German-American elite's perspective, America should have been backing Germany not Britain and her allies; but this was pie in the sky, save to all but the most misled of this elite. Practically, as few if any sentient individuals in the diaspora *could* foresee America's going to war alongside Germany, notwithstanding that it might have made plain sense to them that it do just that, the next best alternative was to prevent the country's economic and political (possibly even military) weight being brought into the struggle on behalf of the Allies. This meant militating in favour of the strictest possible neutrality, by working within the American political system. As expressed in December 1914 by Frederick F. Schrader, co-editor with George Sylvester Viereck of the recently established (and German-funded) weekly, *The*

Fatherland, German-Americans were going to 'pledge ourselves to stand together to visit political retribution upon those in our eyes guilty of . . . evasion and infraction of the ethics of neutrality, regardless of party' (quoted in Keller, 1979, p. 145). To this end, three major intermediate steps were envisioned: (1) to prevent the sale of arms and munitions to either side (such sales were permitted both by international law and America's domestic legislation, but the Allies' control of the seas meant that only Britain and France could derive benefit from shopping in America's armaments market); (2) to prevent loans being extended to either side (read: the Allies primarily) by American public and private institutions; and (3) to elect in 1916 a president who could be counted on to be, if not pro-German, then at least not anti-German.

In all three instances, the NGAA spearheaded an ethnic lobbying effort of unprecedented proportions on behalf of the kin state. Working with German-American representatives in Congress, it managed to get bills introduced in late 1914 calling for an embargo on munitions sales to belligerents; in this gambit it was ultimately unsuccessful (the bills never making it out of committee), although the campaign did manage to foment the tightening of links with the Irish-Americans, who had their own obvious reasons for not wishing success upon Great Britain. More luck was had, at least for a brief time, with the campaign against loans to the Allies, given that pressure from German-American advocacy groups, above all the NGAA, did dampen enthusiasm for purchasing Allied bonds on the part of more than a few American bankers who were worried that they might thereby lose their German-American depositors.

By early 1916, the near-exclusive objective of the Germany Lobby came to be focused on the November elections, with the assumption being that the electoral clout of the large German-American community could be counted on to send to Congress enough German- and Irish-Americans so as to guarantee that America would stay out of war, as well as to prevent the re-election of President Woodrow Wilson, who had become by this time a *bête noire* of German-America—second in its loathing only to the greatly despised (by most of them) former president, Theodore Roosevelt. The dual objective of the NGAA going into that year's electoral season, thus, was to prevent Roosevelt from obtaining the Republican nomination for president in the summer, and then to defeat Wilson and the Democrats in the fall. The slogan adopted by the Alliance's Illinois branch in March 1916 put it pithily, 'Alle gegen Roosevelt und Wilson' [All against Roosevelt and Wilson] (quoted in Johnson, 1999, p. 116).

There was reason to believe that the NGAA's trump card, the 'ethnic vote', could be played effectively. Former President William Howard Taft would almost certainly still have been in the White House in 1916 had not his predecessor and quondam friend, Theodore Roosevelt, run for president himself on a third-party ticket in 1912 (Chase, 2004), thereby crippling the Republican Party and enabling Woodrow Wilson to become only the second Democrat since Abraham Lincoln's election in 1860 to seize the country's greatest electoral prize. As the Democrats were traditionally at such a disadvantage in nationwide contests—Grover Cleveland having been the party's only other successful presidential candidate since James Buchanan—Wilson was held to be eminently beatable at the start of the campaigning; but there was a fear in Republican ranks that should the GOP nominate Roosevelt in 1916, it would, as Taft wrote to a friend in April, 'drive the Germans to Wilson', such was the hatred of German-America for the former president (quoted in Lovell, 1980, p. 18). However, as far as the NGAA was concerned, Wilson was no improvement over Roosevelt, thus the organization bent its efforts to lobbying

on behalf of the man who eventually would secure the Republican nomination in June 1916, an associate justice of the US Supreme Court and former governor of New York, Charles Evans Hughes.

Hughes was not a particularly dynamic campaigner, but the race nevertheless turned out to be incredibly tight. The German-Americans might have been entitled, and they certainly missed no opportunity, to claim that they had been instrumental in his having secured the Republican nomination, but they were unable to spell the difference between victory and defeat for the despised Wilson. Though often interpreted as one of those rare presidential elections in which foreign policy proved to be the dominant issue, 1916's outcome was primarily a function of domestic issues, with Wilson's progressive legislative record being held to be responsible for his ability to take all but four states west of the Mississippi, and therefore narrowly to secure victory, with 277 electoral votes to Hughes's 254. It would not, however, be until California's returns were in that the outcome was known, and had Wilson's Republican challenger garnered that state's 13 electoral votes, the President would have lost the electoral vote, 267 to 264, even though scoring a margin of victory nationwide of 600,000 in the popular vote. Wilson squeaked by in California with a razor-thin edge of 3,773 votes, and in so doing he became the first Democratic incumbent since Andrew Jackson to achieve re-election.

Obviously, foreign policy factored somewhat into the campaign, given that a war was raging and American lives were being lost on the high seas. Yet because *both* candidates were running on a 'peace' ticket, each promising to keep America out of the European war, it is hard, even today, to gauge the effectiveness of the last great effort at ethnic lobbying that would ever be mounted by the German diaspora in America—the last great effort, because in stark contrast to the period preceding World War I, the German-Americans during the 1930s would engage in hardly any 'diasporic lobbying' on behalf of Germany, save on the part of a minuscule fraction of their community who were enamoured of Nazism, an ideology that the vast majority of German-Americans simply refused to support (Holian, 1996). Perhaps the fears expressed by Taft and others about alienating the German-American voter were instrumental in securing for Hughes the nomination, but it might also have been, as some have argued, the perception of the Republican as the 'German candidate' that ended up costing him the White House. One thing only seems clear, in retrospect: the German-Americans certainly did not control American foreign policy, notwithstanding the diaspora's formidable lobbying assets. The tail was not wagging the dog. Germans back home might have been counting on the diaspora to unseat a president considered to be pro-Allied, but to the extent the perception grew that Berlin was working to promote a Hughes victory (it was actually not doing this), the principle of the opposite effect came into play, such that the effort to 'use the German element in the United States as a political club produced exactly the opposite effect than the one desired. It discredited the German minority and increased the already growing distrust of German motives in the Wilson administration' (Kerr, 1961, pp. 104–105).

From the Germany to the Israel Lobby

In talking about today's Israel Lobby in the context of the Germany Lobby of a century ago, we must be careful not to succumb to the temptation of forcing the objects of our curiosity on to Procrustean beds of our convenience. We are not arguing that there is a basal

similarity between the two ethnic lobbies, much less an identity between them; we simply suggest that some traits apparently shared by both lobbies might perhaps provide us with clues to how we should contemplate the always vexing matter that confronts those who attempt to discuss ethnic diasporas and their impact on American foreign policy—namely, the question of how one demonstrates, or even understands, 'influence' (Lieberman, 2009; Mearsheimer & Walt, 2009). For if one thing is clear about the postulated connection between ethnic group lobbying (the 'inputs') and the fruit of same (the policy 'outputs'), it is this: the matter is nothing if not murky. In the apt (if understated) words of one student of the issue of ethnic-group influence, the 'systematic study of ethnic minority influence on U.S. foreign policy remains an incomplete enterprise' (Rubenzer, 2008, p. 169). What we have done so far in this article is to place the emphasis on input 'variables', particularly those related to the size, societal esteem and organizational competence of one very significant diaspora in American history. If we have sought to demonstrate anything, it is that assumptions of diasporic 'influence' over outputs (i.e. policy) must be made cautiously—even if the diaspora in question is said to have been so large and well placed as virtually to compel having its wishes heeded by dint of demographic weight and social standing.

So using the German-Americans as a cautionary tale, let us turn in this section to comparative analysis, asking some questions about the Israel Lobby in light of what we think we know about the Germany Lobby. We do argue there are some commonalities between our two cases, but before getting to them, we wish to highlight a pair of notable ways in which our two diasporas have differed, and markedly so. First, for centuries, the Jews were not only a diaspora, but also a diasporic nation—the population of Jews in the reputed homeland of Israel was insignificant, and there was no independent state that was of majority Jewish population or identified itself with the Jewish people. In other words, the vast majority of Jews lived outside the homeland, and there was no kin state. For the Germans, who came to the diasporic experience at a much later date than the Jews, there *was* an ancestral homeland—or to put it more accurately, there were any number of Germanies with which elements in the diaspora could and did connect emotionally, often negatively rather than positively, at least prior to Bismarck's successful, pride-inducing, unification of the country. After unification was achieved in 1871, a sense of kin state analogous to that felt by the Jewish diaspora following Israel's creation became apparent, and for most (though not all) German-Americans, the fortunes of the ancestral homeland began to matter very much to them, never more so, as we showed above, than during the early twentieth century. So the Jews have a lengthier experience in diasporic conditions, but the Germans preceded them in having a tangible, existing, kin state.

The second major difference concerns the size of the diaspora, and how this in turn might be said to relate to the electoral system in the USA, given that one of the presumed sources of diasporic influence in that system comes through the vote. As we saw in the discussion of the Germany Lobby, the electoral clout of that diaspora, though often wildly exaggerated, was taken seriously by American politicians a century ago, just as it was by political figures in Germany. So what can we say about the mooted Jewish influence on American policy, via that electoral system? Estimates vary, but a reasonable assumption is that only about 2% of the American population (around 5.3 million) considers itself Jewish, a figure roughly equal to, perhaps a bit smaller than, the share of the US population that is Muslim (Mazrui, 1996; Pfeffer, 2007). Nationally, of course, this number is almost insignificant, when set against an American population that now

numbers about 300 million. Still, the vagaries of the American electoral system are such that small but concentrated populations can have large impacts on results. The Jewish population is highly concentrated, as Mearsheimer & Walt (2007, p. 163) put it, 'in key states like California, Florida, Illinois, New York and Pennsylvania'. This means that there are numerous Congressional districts wherein they form, if not a majority, then at least a sizeable minority of the population. These states also carry significant weight in the electoral college, making them important to presidential campaigns. This is especially true in Florida's case—it is one of the so-called 'swing' states, perennially divided between Republicans and Democrats. Although Jews have tended to vote Democratic, turning even a few thousand Jewish voters from one party to the other could be the difference in a presidential race that came down to Florida, as some think happened in 2000.

Does this mean that America follows a policy towards Israel that, in the absence of the above-mentioned electoral considerations, it would not follow? Here caution is in order. The argument that the 'Jewish vote' makes a critical difference not only hinges on the 'swing-state' thesis, but also is dependent on certain core assumptions about how America's pluralistic political system works. That system has been said to be a marvellous mechanism for facilitating 'ethnic involvement in foreign policy', because it provides numerous points of contact between the people and those who govern them (Shain & Bristman, 2002, p. 69). Thus, the logic is that ethnic groups, by becoming active and vocal on behalf of a certain country or issue, can modify American government policy, with several vectors of influence being identifiable. So much for the logic; what does the recent evidence reveal?

First, it shows that American politicians are not hesitant to 'play the Israel card' when they are on the hustings. To take one example, the word 'Israel' was used 16 times during the 2008 vice-presidential debate between Joe Biden and Sarah Palin, with Iran being mentioned 12 times—often in connection with threats to Israel; by contrast, China warranted only two mentions, and Russia none at all (Cable News Network, 2008). At other times, the Republican ticket attempted to cast doubt on Democratic nominee Barack Obama's support for Israel, by tying him to Rashid Khalidi, a professor at Columbia University and a prominent critic of Israel (Hamby, 2008). Paradoxically, however—and this is in marked contrast to the manner in which the Germany Lobby construed the kin state a century or so ago—studies have shown that concern for Israel actually ranks quite low on the list of issues of greatest importance to American Jews. In a recent poll by the American Jewish Committee, support for Israel was listed by only 6% of respondents as their overriding interest, trailing the economy/jobs, the war in Iraq and terrorism/national security (Burston, 2008). Six per cent, of course, is not a trivial number—elections have regularly been won and lost on less—nor does it follow that those who had other top-ranking concerns are in any way indifferent to the kin state; they are not. But it does suggest that compared with the intensity of the emotional bond German-Americans developed for Germany during the run-up to World War I and especially during the first 3 years of that conflict, Jewish-Americans are less attached to the kin state, and presumably this has some bearing on their electoral behaviour. So to the extent that the Israel Lobby is 'influential', it is probably not because of any success attained in bidding for the votes of what is a small minority of a small minority. This in turn leads us into a discussion of a major similarity between our two ethnic lobbies, concerning organizational competence.

Although many American Jews may feel unattached to Israel, find other issues much more pressing, and may even disapprove of Israeli policies and actions, the most powerful

political organizations of the Jewish-American diaspora are consecrated to directing US policy in the direction of safeguarding the interests of Israel—lobbying the host state, in other words, to the advantage of the kin state. Most accounts of this lobby begin with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, or AIPAC, which is the closest thing to a counterpart of the NGAA we can find. AIPAC describes itself as a '100,000-member national grassroots movement' helping to 'make Israel more secure by ensuring that American support remains strong'. AIPAC (2008) works to 'educate' members of Congress, policy-makers and others about issues important to Israel. This educational endeavour is said to be highly successful, and the organization, like the much larger NGAA of a century earlier, is often acclaimed as the 'poster' entity of ethnic lobbying on behalf of a kin state—the kind of organization that other ethnic diasporas can only dream of having.

Behind AIPAC are other entities, some of them devoted to 'public affairs' like AIPAC, others classified as 'political action' groupings, which means that they can fundraise for and donate to political campaigns (Tivnan, 1987, p. 85). The economic success of the Jewish diaspora in the USA suggests that its members, not unlike the much larger German diaspora of a century earlier, have the resources to commit to these political campaigns, as well as to support AIPAC in its activities. All of this means that the relatively small Jewish-American population, even though many of its members might not rank policy towards Israel as their most pressing concern, can have an impact far beyond its size. There is an ingrained advantage for a small, cohesive force that is passionate on an issue to which most of the population is indifferent—policy-makers will tend to bend their positions in favour of those who care about the issue, even if their numbers are small, if they are 'confident that the rest of the population will not penalize them for doing so' (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007, p. 140). This is an important point, to which we return in our concluding section.

It is not just the obvious and direct public affairs activities of the Israel Lobby that draw the attention of observers. Earlier in this paper we wrote of a second model standing in contrast to direct 'lobbying'—a model we termed 'cognitive osmosis'. In this understanding, ethnic diasporas do 'matter' in foreign policy debates, but they do so indirectly, and their impact can be either positive or negative, for reasons related to 'identity' calculations in the host state. Those who believe that an ethnic diaspora can wield outsized influence on American foreign policy sometimes turn their attention to this second model, and they argue that a 'lobby' can advance the kin state's interests by attempting to change the very rules by which the political game is played in the host state. It is in this sense that Yossi Shain and Barry Bristman have spoken of the role that the Jewish-American diaspora has played in 'sensitizing' the American establishment and public to anti-Semitism, instilling and maintaining a sense of shame for the Holocaust and other Christian/European persecutions of Jews, to the point where American policy-makers sometimes even outdo the Israelis in chanting 'Never Again!' (Shain & Bristman, 2002, p. 83). In other words, it is not just American Jews but Americans *tout court* who are used to hearing support, and usually only support, for Israel from their political leaders. In some ways, expressing this support has become a touchstone for American political candidates, a test that must be passed in order to establish one's foreign policy credentials and cement one's status as a 'serious' candidate for high office.

This is why Israel was made to enter into the most recent presidential election campaigning. Sarah Palin, anxious as she was to establish her foreign policy credentials,

sought to appeal to the motherhood issues of American policy: hatred of terrorists, distrust of Russia and love for Israel. Meanwhile, the attempt by the Republican campaign to paint the Democratic standard-bearer as 'too risky, too radical' naturally included calling into question his support for Israel, leading in turn to Obama's effort to prove that he was neither risky nor radical by giving an emphatically pro-Israel speech at the 2008 AIPAC convention. For sure, some of this may simply have reflected a process of bidding for those so-called 'swing' Jewish voters; more relevantly, however, it was about sending a message to the broader American public—a message in which support for Israel has become a sort of code by which one can say, 'I am a responsible and serious American politician'.

These methods of limiting and shaping debate, to repeat, transcend simple lobbying, fundraising and voting, and they represent a tremendous, foundational asset for the Jewish-American diaspora in its quest to protect its kin state; it is no surprise that other diasporas (Muslim-Americans excepted) hold it in such awe. So the Jewish diaspora in the USA can indeed be said to have its Lobby, but more importantly, it has been able to benefit from the very background against which the host state debates policy, so much so that you might almost say, paradoxically, that it really has no need of a Lobby at all—or at least has no *continuing* need of one. As the constructivists might put it, the Israel Lobby has been able to benefit from the modification of the 'identity' of the host state in such a way that American interests have come to be conceived differently than they might otherwise have been in the absence of the diaspora and, possibly, its Lobby as well. This, in a nutshell, is another way of framing the question as to whether the 'tail' of diasporic lobbying wags the 'dog' of foreign policy, but it is a much more indirect way.

Conclusions

How might the experience of the Germany Lobby be invoked in an effort to cast some comparative light on the recent, and emotional, debate about the Israel Lobby? We began our comparative enquiry into the impact of ethnic diasporas on American foreign policy because we believed that the debate over the Israel Lobby was proceeding in a profoundly ahistorical fashion. Specifically, we were intrigued by what initially seemed to be an anomaly from a century ago. That is to say, if the Israel Lobby of today holds sway over the US foreign policy it is often argued to possess (for all the reasons we cited in this article appertaining to diasporic strength), then how, we wondered, was it that the considerably more powerful German-American diaspora of a century ago should have failed so memorably in advancing the interests of its kin state? Notwithstanding strenuous, near Herculean, efforts to influence debates among the public at large and especially inside what would later be called the 'Beltway', why was the AIPAC of its day, the NGAA, so incapable of getting central decision-makers to see things as it saw them, and to do things as it wished them to be done?

The answer might seem obvious, at first glance anyway. Germany a century ago was considered to be an unfriendly country by many Americans, whereas Germany's European rivals and soon-to-be enemies were regarded as friends, thus the German-Americans had a very tough row to hoe. In this view, international balance of power considerations trump domestic political (including and especially demographic) variables in establishing causality; and the most salient such structural consideration was the increasing perception, from the late nineteenth century onwards, that the Kaiser's Germany represented a security

threat to the USA (Smith, 1965). By contrast, most Americans today, for a variety of reasons, either look favourably upon Israel or at least do not have any strong negative impressions of that country, making the task of AIPAC so easy as almost to render it superfluous, and this notwithstanding the appearance the Obama administration tries to convey of being more 'even-handed' on the Israel–Palestinian issue (Schwartz, 2010). Relative to the extremely difficult situation of the German Lobby during the Great War, the contemporary Israel Lobby is pushing against an open door—and its success should be interpreted in that light.

Laying the entire causality at the feet of external structural pressures, however, is scarcely more satisfactory than pointing to the traditional American support for Israel and reasoning that the Israel Lobby must be an unbeatable machine: the truth, as usual, lies somewhere in between. On the one hand, like the Germany Lobby before it, the Israel Lobby would find it much more difficult to keep that door open if Israel came to be regarded by large numbers of Americans as an unfriendly state, support for which would be interpreted as being contrary to American national interests. To date, the Israel Lobby has been the 'easy case' to invoke if one wants to make an argument about diasporic tails wagging foreign policy dogs. The problem, of course, is that easy cases are only good for showing what does not need to be shown: correlation. The Israel Lobby wants the USA to take actions that benefit Israel? So too does the American public and the country's decision-making elite! What kind of lobbyists, regardless of their training, skills, or funding, could fail to succeed in that kind of setting?

On the other hand, we must not ignore the very real possibility that the Lobby itself influences the ease of the setting in which it operates, a classic feedback effect. As pointed out above, the Israel Lobby has never been and can never be just about votes or campaign financing—it has consistently attempted to broaden its message, include non-Jews and advance the idea that support for Israel is a worthy policy for Washington. In this, the weak demographic strength of American Jewry may have been its hidden advantage. Without a massive number of loyal votes to reward or punish politicians, the Israel Lobby has been forced to innovate, and has done so effectively by helping to promote a pro-Israeli mindset in American political culture, as noted earlier. By contrast, the Germany Lobby of a century ago was, initially, lulled to sleep by the mistaken conviction that it could count on a vast harvest of votes so as to influence American policy in a direction favourable to the kin state. Secure in its demographics, the Germany Lobby had less need to be creative in propagating a pro-Berlin message. Worse, the sheer number of German-Americans could make it easier for many of their countrymen to view them as a potentially powerful, and 'disloyal', voting bloc. As we have argued, this conviction became especially powerful as Germany grew to appear more sinister and less friendly, and it contributed to the impression of Hughes as the 'German candidate' in 1916.

Kenneth Waltz's third image surely remains relevant to the story we have told herein: structural pressures do have a way of conditioning (some say even 'causing') outcomes, and it is not hard to see their effect in undercutting the influence of the Germany Lobby once World War I got underway. It is more than conceivable—indeed it is certain—that an analogous situation in future, in which Israel's image came to resemble that of the Second Reich (hard though this might be to imagine at present), would also spell the end for the Israel Lobby's ostensive record of success in Washington. However, a structural perspective would miss the deeper aspects of the influence of diasporic lobbies, and indeed all lobbies in general. Structural pressures, after all, must be interpreted

before they can be felt, and it may well be that the genius of the Israel Lobby has resided in its focusing on changing the context of interpretation. It is tempting to end by remarking that one's judgement of the power and effectiveness of today's Israel Lobby must await it confronting a 'hard case', such as that faced by the Germany Lobby of the early twentieth century. However, it may be wiser to conclude with the observation that the real measure of success for any diasporic lobby is not winning 'hard cases', but rather avoiding them altogether.

Notes

1. For a broader usage of the term, one that does not insist on the importance of close sentimental links with the homeland and its politics, see Schulze *et al.* (2008).
2. Some writers, however, insist America is not a nation of immigrants, but rather one of *settlers*. For this argument, see Huntington (2004).

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